

Minutes
Delaware Council of Faith-Based Partnerships Meeting
Thursday, October 27th, 2016
1pm-3pm
Congregation Beth Shalom
1801 Baynard Blvd.
Wilmington, DE 19802
United States

Attendees: Doug Gerdts, Pramod Mathur, Jennifer Hill, Max Wolf, Michael Beals, Kenneth Foster, Flora McConkie, John Sykes, Rich Walton, Steven Boone.

Doug called the meeting to order at approx. 1pm.

September minutes approved. Small changes made.

Upcoming November 3rd Interfaith Dialogue Event: The Interfaith Dialogue event will run from 11:30am to 2:30pm and be held at the CHEER Center in Georgetown DE on November 3rd. Expected turnout is estimated to be around 45-55 guests. The event will be an Interfaith Dialogue that will consist of a six-person panel that is composed of persons from six differing religions with Doug moderating. The six people on the panel will be given three questions and a one-hour window to answer the questions, followed by open discussion and question. The speakers will be given three minutes to speak for each question asked. Jen will be collecting the question cards from the audience with a new strategy of collecting the cards at the end of each segment or during the second segment for review. John Sykes will be the timekeeper. The dialogue panel will consist of members as follows: Jeanne as Roman Catholic representative, Usman as Islam representative, Paul as Hindu representative, Michael as Judaism representative, Flora as LDS/Mormon representative, and Kenny as Protestant representative.

Lunch will be provided from 11:45am to 12:30pm. Lunch services will be provided by the CHEER center. At 12:30pm the panel will be given three questions and one hour to answer those questions. At 1:30pm the panel will be given time to clarify and elaborate on any issues or topics they wish for fifteen minutes. At 1:45pm questions for the panel from the audience will be hosted for a half hour. At 2:15pm there will be a summary and closing on what has been learned and shared followed by an opportunity for networking. The event will close and dismiss at 2:30pm.

The third question asked to members on the panel has been reworked. The questions are designed to be objective, subjective, and personal consecutively now. The following questions will be asked to the panel to answer:

1. What are the basic philosophies/ideologies of your religion?

2. What are the common misconceptions that people have about your faith?
3. What is it about your faith that makes you a committed follower?

Council members are encouraged to bring neutral information to hand out or leave at the display table, multiple copies are desired for guests, but only one piece of information per person from council members. Representative John Carney has been invited as a member of Congress to the event. Discussion was floated about inviting additional elected officials.

Upcoming November 16th Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration event: The Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration will run from 7pm to 8:30pm and be held at First & Central Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, DE. Members and speakers should arrive a half-hour early before start time and will be sitting in the front three pews. The agenda and procession for the event has changed slightly. The event will carry out as follows: a procession in with instrumental music, Doug will perform a welcoming, the Wilmington Young Men's Choir will perform a Hebrew-rooted gathering song, faith representatives 1-3 will speak, then an instrumental interlude, faith representatives 4-7 will speak, the offering/donation collection will then be taken with an instrumental interlude, faith representatives 8-10 will speak, then there will be a group prayer, the children's chorus will then perform the song "Let There Be Peace On Earth", a closing will then be performed by way of prayer with instrumental music playing during dismissal into reception.

We will have 10 representatives total from differing faiths as our speakers for the event. These representatives will include speakers from the following faiths and populations: Hinduism, Native American, Catholic, Sikh, LDS/Mormon, Baha'i, Buddhist, Jewish, and Unitarian Universalist. Each faith will speak for approximately 2 minutes (or about 200 words) on gratitude rooted in their respective faith tradition. If the speakers have or are able to obtain traditional garments from their respective faiths they are to dress accordingly so. The speaking orders have been arranged as follows per the 3 individual groups: Group 1: Hindu represented by Paul Mathur, Native American/First Nation represented by Dennis Coker of the Lenni Lenape Tribe, Catholic represented by Monsignor John Hopkins; Group 2: Sikh representative is TBA, LDS/Mormon represented by Flora McConkie, Islam represented by Usman Sandhu, Baha'I represented by Shirley Ganao and Nell Loder; Group 3: Buddhist represented by John Sykes, Judaism represented by Michael Beals, Unitarian Universalist represented by Paula Maiorano.

Currently Jeanne is to provide the speaker linkage to transition between speakers and provide closing prayer. Jeanne will additionally be providing the press release. Jen will ask the Governor's office to distribute the release. Jen and Max will be handing out programs at both entrances. The main entrance will be utilized for the event. Interest has been expressed in having semiprofessional photographer at event.

Following the event there will be a small reception including cookies and coffee arranged by Doug. There will be an offering/collection taken for donation/charity purposes for the event. The selected charity is the Food Bank of Delaware with only cash donations being accepted. The parking for the event will be at the Wilmington Club and other specified areas by Doug, although parking will be very limited. Attendance limit for the event is 400 with 50 already expected to

attend due to presence of children's chorus and parents. Music will now be provided by First & Central's organist. There will be a bulletin passed out that includes one paragraph (5 sentences) of information per faith on it as well as an agenda and names of speakers and guests that is being put together by Doug and First & Central. The Governor has informed us that he will be out of the country and unable to attend unfortunately. Discussion was floated of possibly video conferencing him into the event although that is still uncertain.

Syrian Refugee Issue: Michael has brought to the attention of the Council the issue of the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the impending influx of refugees incoming in the very near future. The HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) and the JFS (Jewish Family Services) are the organizations spearheading the effort. Refugees may begin arriving in December 2016 and keep arriving throughout 2017. The commitment is for fifty individuals (12-15 families). Currently looking for houses of worship to sign on for adopting 1-2 refugee families. Looking to pull houses of worship together to help out a small bit with big issues. Attention was brought to the fact that the vetting process is exhaustive and it is a 90-day commitment. Looking for dispersion of refugees across the state. Actively looking for volunteer doctors and dentists. Attention brought to Medicaid as an option available for those whose ages meet the qualifications. Any way to get information out is desired. Rich Walton noted that there is \$2 million budget for support of refugees coming into America by way of grant. Rich also noted he is the disaster coordinator for faith organizations for long-term recovery and will bring this up again in the Spring. In terms of refugees there was note that there is a creative "toolbox" of resources for faith houses to access and utilize available. The difference was noted between asylees and refugees. Question asked if the new sitting Governor will have the same stance on the Syrian Refugee Crisis as current and what to do in the event of change on the issue.

Additional Discussion: Attention was brought to the issue of Council's possible disbandment. Council should not be disbanded unless official act is given to do so by new sitting Governor, which seems unlikely currently. Idea floated of creating a Facebook social media page. Michael has inquired about acquiring our Bahai' faith representative speakers to be on the Council in the future. Doug will discuss process in a future meeting.

Next Meeting: There will be no meeting between the November 3rd and November 16th events. Following the events there is currently a tentative meeting scheduled for Thursday November 29th at the Smyrna Rest Stop from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Flora will arrange meeting venue if consensus given that there is a need for said meeting, otherwise communication might be by email only. There is an additional tentative date for the first meeting of 2017 to be sometime in the second week of January.

Meeting between Council adjourned at approx. 2:50pm.

Submitted by Steven Boone, Secretary, November 2nd, 2016.